



# Mentoring Skills

Office of Training and Diversity  
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

The mentoring and training of scientists is an important goal at the National Institutes of Health. The key components of mentoring outlined below represent training that enables senior investigators at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to foster the careers of their trainees.

## Communication

- Meet with trainee individually and as part of the laboratory staff regularly.
- Provide opportunities for communications and interaction between trainee and laboratory staff.
- Encourage opportunities to communicate orally and in writing.
- Inform trainee of available resources, including:
  - Individuals with complementary knowledge and expertise
  - Core facilities, including Research Technologies Branch services
  - Human resource support and availability.

## Research/Skills Development

- Assist trainee in selecting a project.
- Help plan, identify, and prioritize projects based on short- and long-term goals.
- Set guidelines for best practices and expectations for ethical conduct in science.
- Ensure understanding of research techniques, record-keeping, analysis, and interpretation of data.
- Encourage initiative and development of increasing independence.
- Involve trainees in discussions within the laboratory.
- Increase awareness of resource management (e.g., supplies, staffing, and budget).
- Provide opportunities to critically review literature.

## Promotion

- Offer opportunities for successful collaborations.
- Encourage attendance at seminars, forums, and professional meetings.
- Encourage presentations at meetings.
- Encourage thinking “outside the box.”
- Assist in the development of writing skills (e.g., grant writing).

### **Career Advice/Assistance**

- Provide solid input regarding education and career development.
- Allow time for education and career development activities (e.g., interviews).
- Provide career contacts and promote networking.
- Forward appropriate position ads to trainee.

### **Evaluation/Review of Work**

- Establish goals and objectives with the trainee at the onset.
- Monitor and provide verbal feedback to the trainee at regular intervals.
- Initiate yearly evaluations.
- Obtain feedback about the trainee from other laboratory staff.
- Encourage the use of an Individual Development Plan (available at <http://hr.od.nih.gov/worklife/career/idp.htm>).

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